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ADOLESCENT BOYS

292 ON approaching any village on the north coast of Bougainville, a stranger will at once be struck by the curious head-gear worn by all the boys, except those who are still mere infants (Pl. 19). This head-gear is called in the Kurtatchi dialect *upi* (Ruri and Munlus dialect *huri*; Sēlō dialect *wasobu*; Hahon (mountain) dialect *wasampo*). Its appearance is more easily appreciated from photographs than from any verbal description. To the unaccustomed onlooker, watching it bob up and down as its wearer goes about his work or play, it seems almost incredible that this ungainly object should be worn except for a joke, yet it is probably the most serious and important thing in the whole culture of the area, being associated with an elaborate series of rules and taboos, which profoundly influence the daily life of the people.

824 The *upi* is made of the leaves of a small fan-palm (*Licuala*) which is common in the bush, and is called in the Kurtatchi dialect *win*.

294 The manufacture is carried out in the *tobar* and is kept secret from the women. The dried and bleached leaves are stretched over a frame made of thin bamboo, the bottom of which is composed of two circles of stiffer cane, not found in the coastal districts but

[283] obtained from the mountain people. The leaves are very neatly stitched together with native fibre-string of exceptional fineness. At the present time this is done with needles from the traders' stores, but in the olden days holes through which to thread the string were made with fine thorns or bits of shell rubbed down to a point on the rough surface of a lump of coral. The bottom of the hat is closely bound round with thicker string. The finished *upi*, though clumsy, is much lighter than it appears to be, but considerable practice is necessary before its wearer acquires sufficient skill to keep it in position as he goes about his various occupations.

ORIGIN OF THE UPI

292 The legend of origin, current over the whole area, runs as follows:

773 A woman was walking in the bush when she saw an *war* wearing an *upi*. The woman looked at the *upi* and liked it very much. She said to

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[p. 194]

881 At this stage in the proceedings I was reluctantly obliged to leave Kurtatchi as my time was at an end. The remainder of the preparations for the *watawutſ*, and the ceremony itself, are therefore described not from observation but from information received from the natives, who professed to be sorry that I was not going to see it. The details given in the following pages have been verified with the utmost care, but it is impossible to know the extent of their incompleteness.

MAKING THE UPI FOR THE WATAWUTſ

881 As soon as the 'long house' is completed, word is sent to the
 294 people of the mountains to come down and help to make the
 621 special *upi* with the red patterns which must be used for the *watawutſ* (Pl. 27). The Kurtatchi people call for this service from the Hahon (Wawon in their dialect, which has no *h*) who live in the foot-hills behind the north coast. The men making the *upi* do not, however, work in the *tobar tſan*, but in the ordinary *tobar*, the only condition being that the owner of the *tobar* must possess a number of pigs—not for use, but as a sign of his prestige. One *tobar* in the village of Kurtatchi could not be used for this purpose because its owner had no pigs. The other two divided between them the making of the *upi*. The boys of the different villages of the group. For boys from Tabut and Wantoa the hats were to be made in the *tobar* belonging to Kakari, of the clan Nakarib, for those of Munlus, Baniata, Bona, Mosang, and Togaragar, in the *tobar* belonging to Wasē, clan Naboin. For the boys of Kurtatchi, the hats are made in the *tobar* of the clan to which each belongs. One hat is made for each boy who is to take part in the ceremony. These special *upi* are called *wasōbō*. The Hahon people are paid for cutting the patterns. In the olden days this payment was made with specially prized stone axe-heads, but nowadays with trade knives, and also sometimes with loin-cloths and other trade goods. Ceremonial currency, either of shell or teeth, must never be used for this payment (perhaps because of its use in connexion with marriage?). The *amro* make the payments to the Hahon people, and are subsequently repaid by the mothers of the initiates.

881 The time occupied in making these hats is a period of great
 294 tension throughout the village. While the work is in progress the
 1764 workers must stay in the *tobar*, and the village must be kept as silent as possible. No sweeping or cleaning must be done. Each

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day the women must leave the village at sunrise, and go to the bush or to the shore. They cannot stop in the village while the work is actually in progress, but they may come back at sunset, when the men have ceased working on the hats for the day, and may sleep in their own huts. The *amro* and the *kwigin* attend at the *tobar*; it is their province to make the hats, the duty of the Hahon people being merely to cut the patterns from the red leaves. These village men are allowed to go to their own huts to sleep, and they are not forbidden sexual intercourse with their wives during this period. The *upi* boys, who would normally be sleeping in the *tobar*, must avoid those in which the work is being done, and find themselves quarters elsewhere. The *tsunaun* of the village sit in the *tobar* while the work is in progress, but take no part in it. No word must be spoken in the *tobar* while the patterns are being cut out. All the time it is essential that the workers should be well fed, and word is sent to the other villages of the group to bring in pig-meat for the men who are making the hats. The *upi* boys collect large quantities of areca-nut and betel-pepper and coco-nuts for them. The work goes on for several days, until each boy in the group is provided with his special hat. When all are finished, the slit-gong is beaten to let every one know that the making of the hats is over.

A story in my collection, related to me independently of any discussion of the ceremony, is here given as it illustrates the state of tension that prevails in the village at this time:

The people were busy making the hats for the *watarulf*. Ten men were cutting the patterns for ten hats. A woman went to cut firewood; she came back, and threw her load of firewood on to the ground. All the men in the *tobar* jumped up angrily. They asked: 'Who is that there?' They said to one man: 'You go and see who it is making a noise with a bundle of firewood.' The man went and saw the woman, she had thrown down her load of firewood. The man saw her. He went back into the *tobar* and said: 'It is a woman, she is throwing down a load of firewood.' The men all got up, they were very angry, they broke the patterns they were cutting. A *tsunaun* said: 'Go and seize her.' Two men went out and seized her; they pushed her into the *tobar*. They asked her: 'Don't you know this thing is very sacred? You defecate into my hands.' (This was explained to me as meaning: 'You don't know much.') Then all the men had connexion with the woman in the *tobar*. When they had all had connexion with her once, they killed her, and cooked her in a pot in the *tobar* and ate her. Then they cut patterns for the hats a second time, they cut ten. When night came, they lit torches;

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 294 they wanted the *tsunam* to see the hats they had made. All the men
 688 who were *tsunam* said: "They are good. You go now and eat some pig.
 [539] You are making very sacred things."

The teller of this story volunteered the statement that nowadays, if a woman behaved as did the woman in the tale, they would not be able to kill her, because the Government had forbidden it.

[754] They would all have intercourse with her, and then somebody would 'make poison' against her and she would die, but it would not be known who was responsible for her death.

PRELIMINARIES

881 When all the preparations are complete, a hut is built in the
 [342] bush, and the boys must sleep there for two nights. The *amro* accompany them. During this time the boys are not allowed to eat anything except one small piece of taro. The reason given for this abstinence is that if they were to eat too much they would be too heavy to be carried on the shoulders of the *amro* during the ceremony.

881 While the boys are in the bush, the people of the village where
 621 the *watarut* is to be held set up platforms in the centre of the
 574 village and cover them with food. All the villages which are sending boys to the ceremony help in providing this food. Vast quantities are required, as people come from villages scattered over a wide area. At the one to be held at Kurtatchi they were expecting contingents from the whole of the north coast of Bougainville and all the islands of Buka. Failure to provide enough food for the assembled multitude would in the olden days have resulted in a fight ending in the breaking up of the village, and even now resentment would be shown by wanton damage to taro crops and coco-nut palms, if nothing worse.

881 Meanwhile, a palisade has been erected round the 'long house',
 417 so high that the women cannot see over it. Then the men go into
 824 the bush and fetch two tall trees. Young canarium almonds are frequently chosen for this purpose, owing to their tall slender trunks, though they are not felled under ordinary circumstances, as their nuts are highly prized as an article of diet. If there is a *wapi* ceremony going on anywhere in the neighbourhood, these trees must be pulled up by the roots instead of being felled, otherwise the *urar* who are about in the bush will be angry.

881 The selected trees are called *rorar*. They are brought near, but
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USEFUL ARTS

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<i>saksak</i>	wooden beater.
<i>rako</i>	round flat stone used to beat on. (<i>Rako</i> is the generic term for 'stone'.)
<i>katahelo</i>	shell resembling a cockle, used to scratch the pattern on the rim of the pot.

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Operations.

<i>tupo</i>	knead ball of mixture of <i>petako</i> and <i>memia</i> .
<i>pósala</i>	hollow out ball of mixture with hand and <i>rako</i> to make bottom of pot.
<i>bónina</i>	put on a coil of clay round the edge of an unfinished pot.
<i>sak</i>	beat down the coil with <i>saksak</i> and <i>rako</i> .
<i>sáhi</i>	smooth over with wet hand.
<i>katahamátsho</i>	(lit. 'make good') pinch off bits of the edge to make it even after putting on the last coil.
<i>némoa</i>	put on the ornamentation round the edge.
<i>tintín</i>	fire the pot.

Women's hoods

The hoods (*tó* or *d3llo* in the Petats dialect, *táhop* in the Kurtatchi dialect) are worn by the women of Buka and the north coast of Bougainville (but not on either east or west coasts of that island) in accordance with the rule of avoidance of the relative called *halis* in the Petats dialect and *waris* in the Kurtatchi dialect, i.e. the husband of a daughter or a sister's daughter, and his brothers (see p. 73). The women carry their hoods with them whenever there is the least chance of coming across one of these taboo relatives, and put them on at his approach. They are worn in any case on all special occasions, such as a ceremonial visit or a ceremonial *kōma*. The women also find the hoods useful to keep off rain or the heat of the sun, and are careful to protect the heads of the babies they carry on their backs while working. When not in use, the hoods are folded up along the joins of the leaves of which they are made. To put on the hood is *ama takop*.

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The hoods are made of pandanus leaves. The strong mid-rib is first stripped off, and the prickly outer edge of the leaf is cut away with a knife made of the black-lip oyster shell. The leaves are then left for a little while to dry in the sun. The next process is to rub them with sand very thoroughly, to clean and smooth them. They are then rolled up tightly and laid on the ground, where they unroll a little. There they remain till thoroughly dry, being turned over

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1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935

ON6 Buka ON6

Kurtatchi

PLATE 62



a. MAKING BASKETS AND WOMEN'S HOODS



b. PLAITING COCO-NUT-PALM LEAVES FOR A SCREEN

[Facing p. 402]

USEFUL ARTS

294 403 occasionally. They are by this time bleached to a pale greenish-grey, which goes yellow with use.

294 386 In the finished hood, sections of these leaves, left in this state, alternate with sections covered over with the leaves of another plant, coloured red. The dye is made of the roots of the tree *rivo* (*Morinda citrifolia*), which are first washed in the sea, then crushed on a stone, and then boiled. After they have boiled for a long time the water is drained off and the leaves dipped in it. The dye is not permanent, but fades in a few weeks. These leaves are not rolled up like the pandanus leaves, but are folded, and then hung up to dry in the shade.

294 [412] When making the hood a woman starts with one leaf doubled. Another leaf is then sewn on to one side, and a third to the other side. They now use needles, but formerly made holes with a sharp fragment of shell and threaded the fibre through them. The thread is made in the same way as a man makes a fish line, by rolling on the thigh. Each worker makes her own as she needs it. It is made from the fibrous inner sheath of the stem of a creeper (*lok* in the Petats dialect, not the same one as is used for making string at Kurtatchi as described on p. 342). The leaves are joined with a running stitch; when it is finished the work is turned over and the join pressed out. When a piece of the required length has been made, it is put aside till another is finished. The two are then fastened together along the two long sides, a piece of thread being laid along the edge of each, and the joining stitches passing over and over it, showing on both sides. Or one length may be made, twice as long as the hood is intended to be, and doubled so that the doubled edge has no sewing. The worker is now handling a flat piece of material consisting of two layers of leaves, sewn together, the whole being about 2 feet broad and varying in length from 2 to 3 feet or more. Some women like their hood to come just over their shoulders, some wear it hanging almost to the ground.

294 531 The hood is then completed by being doubled and joined at the top with stitches in a wavy line (Pl. 62a). Some women are very skilful in ornamenting the leaves with a pattern of stitches made with flat strips of fibre dyed red and black, but most hoods are left plain, except for the red leaves, which are stitched on over the others when the two layers are joined up.

184 436 The Petats women make large numbers of these hoods, and trade them to the people of the hill villages of Buka and to the 438

DEATH AND THE URAR

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thrown into the sea with the body. But his pillow remains behind in the house; a special feast is made for it at a later time, perhaps two or three years after, when it is burnt, with spears and other things, and pig is cooked on the fire. The widow stays in the house while the man is being buried, together with the young girls. The men and the old women of the village go to the graveyard. The widow continues to wail all that day, after the others have ceased. She must not eat till her husband 'is gone out of her sight'.

If the wife was very fond of her husband, she may request that his body be buried in the house. Sometimes the body is kept thus for a time and then the bones are taken up and buried in the graveyard, sometimes it stays in the house where it was first buried.

After the burial, whether in the house or in the graveyard, the front verandah (*tagoan*, the men's side) is closed up with coco-nut leaves, and the bush is left to grow up round it. The man's wives, and his mother if she is alive, stop inside the house, and are looked after by the other women of the village. They put black paint (*t/sina*) on their bodies which they must smear all over. They cut their hair short when they first go into seclusion; it is left to grow while they are shut up.

While they remain in the house the women make special belts (*ms*) (see Pl. 75 and Chap. XI, p. 436) with an intricately woven pattern of several colours. If the deceased is a person of rank they must make enough belts for every man and woman of the village to wear. This sometimes takes as long as eight or ten months (for a commoner two or three months is enough). The women remain shut up all this time. The bush grows up round the house, so that it is scarcely seen, and the pigs defile the front verandah.

When enough belts have been made, a time is fixed for the women to come out. Then men clear a path to their taro gardens which have been looked after meanwhile by their friends. They put on more *t/sina*, but are not allowed to use *ois* (red paint). They put on the belts. The men take spears, and give each woman two arrows (*amag*) set with bones of the flying fox. They come out holding these. They go round to the front of the house and break the fence of coco-nut leaves round the front verandah. This is done in the early morning. They go back to their own side of the house (*babots*), and stay a little while, then they go to the taro garden. They must plant some taro in a special corner of the garden (*manis*). When they have finished they take off the belts,